

Risk Assessment Questionnaire

Nevada Risk Assessment Summary

The Risk Assessment Questionnaire is a tool that assists the Nevada Information Technology Project Oversight committee (ITPOC) and state project managers with quantifying and summarizing information technology (IT) project risks.

The questionnaire breaks down IT project risk into several categories: Strategic, Financial, Project Management, Technology, Change Management/Operational and Quality Assurance. The responses are entered into the Risk Assessment model and a Risk Assessment report is generated. The project receives a risk "score" in each category and the scores are scaled against a calibrated index to show high, medium and low risk.

A Risk Management monthly worksheet is also generated showing the questions by category that scored medium or high risk. These are the identified risks the project manager must analyze and manage. The Risk Management worksheet is updated with the progress made towards resolving the identified risk items and the corrective action taken.

The objective of such information is to provide the ITPOC and the project manager with focus areas for risk mitigation.

Please answer each of the following questions. The average time to complete this questionnaire is between 30 and 45 minutes.

Risk Assessment Questionnaire

PROJECT:

DATE:

Strategic Risk

#1 To what degree is the project purpose aligned with the agency's overall business strategy?

This question assesses the degree of alignment between the project objectives and the agency's business objectives.

- A. Project objectives have been clearly documented and can be linked to specific agency business objectives
- B. The project direction is consistent with the business strategy but the relationship has not been clearly documented
- C. Project objectives are not clearly related to the business strategy
- D. Some or all project objectives may be in conflict with the stated strategy for the business

#2 How clearly are the expected project outcomes defined?

This question is concerned with the way in which project objectives have been set. Vague objectives increase the probability that project outcomes vary from the expectations/input of the project supervisors.

- A. Expected outcomes are well defined
- B. Expected outcomes are minimally defined
- C. Overall project outcomes are broadly defined
- D. Outcomes are not clearly defined or contain little detail

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#3 Have metrics been established to verify the successful completion of each project phase?

This question addresses the need to have a means of measuring project completion. Without these means risk is increased.

- A. Metrics have been established for each phase of the project
- B. Metrics have been established for the first phase of the project
- C. Metrics to determine the success of the total project have been established but not specific to a phase
- D. No metrics have been established to ensure successful project completion

#4 To what extent are senior management committed to the project and its outcomes?

The project is at much risk without the commitment from the senior management team.

- A. Senior management is fully committed and has openly endorsed the project
- B. Senior management agree with the need for the project, but it does not represent their highest priority
- C. Senior management does not have a consensus regarding the project
- D. The consensus of senior management is that the project is not warranted

#5 How severe would be the result of late delivery?

This question probes the urgency to which the new system is needed to perform the business processes.

- A. No noticeable disruption of the business
- B. Some disruption to limited, non-critical areas of the business
- C. Some disruption to critical, time-valued areas of the business
- D. Major disruption to the business because the new system is critical to the core business functions

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Financial Risk

#1 If the original cost estimates have increased, has additional adequate funding been approved?

This question will assess if adequate funding is available for the project.

- A. Original cost estimates are still valid
- B. Original cost estimates have changed a small percentage and current funding is still adequate
- C. Original cost estimates have changed a large percentage and additional funding has been requested
- D. Original cost estimates have changed a large percentage and additional funding has **NOT yet** been requested

#2 When does the authorization for the project funds expire?

This question will assess how soon the authorization for the project funds will expire.

- A. More than 2 full fiscal years
- B. At the end of 2 full fiscal years
- C. At the end of 1 full fiscal year
- D. Less than 1 fiscal year

#3 To what degree have existing expenditures met budgeted amounts?

This question will assess the current budget performance to date.

- A. Existing expenditures have consistently been within budget amounts
- B. Most expenditures have been within the budget amounts with a small percentage exceeding budget amounts
- C. Some significant expenditures have exceeded budget amounts with others remaining within budget
- D. Existing expenditures have consistently exceeded budget amounts or clear budgets have not yet been established

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Project Management Risk

#1 Does the project management team have relevant experience?

This question determines the degree of experience in dealing with similar sized projects.

- A. Members of the project management team have experience leading projects of similar size and complexity
- B. Members of the project management team have had exposure to projects of similar size and complexity but not in lead roles
- C. Members of the project management team have had limited exposure to projects of similar size and complexity and generally lack detailed knowledge
- D. Members of the project management team have no experience with projects of similar size and complexity

#2 Does the team member assigned to perform Quality Assurance have relevant experience?

This question determines the degree of experience in dealing with similar sized projects.

- A. The team member has experience with projects of similar size and complexity
- B. The team member has had exposure to projects of similar size and complexity
- C. The team member has had limited exposure to projects of similar size and complexity and generally lacks detailed knowledge
- D. The team member has had no experience with projects of similar size and complexity or no one has been assigned to perform quality assurance

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#3 To what extent has a work plan been developed for the entire project lifecycle?

This question determines if the proper resource levels have been ascertained throughout the whole project.

- A. A detailed work plan has been created using an industry accepted methodology and experience from projects of similar size and scope
- B. A work plan has been created using detailed project estimates; but not based on a comparable project
- C. A work plan has been created using general areas of the project lifecycle, but there is not a clear understanding yet of the needed resources
- D. No work plan exists at this time.

#4 To what degree have critical checkpoints and milestones been established for this project?

This question determines if established checkpoints have been made for the project. This will allow the project managers to more effectively reach project milestones.

- A. Clearly measurable and achievable milestones with firm dates have been created throughout the entire project lifecycle
- B. Milestones, although not clearly measurable, with firm dates have been set for part of the project
- C. Milestones have been created for the project but dates are not firmly set
- D. No milestones or checkpoints exist at this time

#5 What is the total elapsed time of the project from start to finish?

Longer projects typically are at more risk than shorter ones. This is because more influencing factors may be introduced throughout the life of the project.

- A. 1 - 6 months
- B. 7 - 12 months
- C. 13 - 24 months
- D. More than 24 months

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#6 Have scope changes occurred which appear to exert pressure on schedule demands?

This question will determine if the business requirements of the project have recently changed. Any such change can negatively impact the success of the project.

- A. No, scope changes have occurred
- B. Yes, but only small changes have been made and have been well documented
- C. Yes, significant scope changes have been made and have been well documented
- D. Yes, significant changes have been made and have not been clearly documented

#7 To what degree have 'open issues' been tracked and included as part of ongoing management processes?

This question probes the level of management involvement in day-to-day activities. Issue tracking is important so that unresolved issues do not pose a threat to the success of the project.

- A. There is proven method of issue tracking and resolution currently in place and is widely used by all parties
- B. There is a method of issue tracking and resolution currently in place and is generally used by all parties
- C. Open issues are dealt with on an item-by-item basis and are not tracked using a standard method
- D. There is no clear issue tracking or resolution approach in use on the project

#8 Is the project development team organized and deployed to a single location?

The project contains more risk if the development sites are spread out in various locations.

- A. All development team members are together with daily interactions with the users
- B. All development team members are co-located but have limited user contact
- C. Development team members are in multiple locations but meet regularly
- D. Development team is located off site and rarely gets together as a whole

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#9 To what degree are the development and user skill requirements well defined?

This question explores the level of detail to which skill requirements have been defined.

- A. Skill requirements with corresponding time frame requirements have been clearly documented for all phases of the project
- B. Skill requirements have been clearly documented for all phases of the project but do not include corresponding time frame requirements
- C. Skill requirements are loosely defined for the project
- D. Skill requirements are vague or not well defined for the project

#10 Were security specifications included in the systems requirement and design?

This question explores the level of detail to which security specifications have been defined.

- A. Security specification requirements with corresponding time frame requirements have been clearly documented for all phases of the project
- B. Security specifications have been clearly documented for all phases of the project but do not include corresponding time frame requirements
- C. Security specifications are loosely defined for the project
- D. Security specifications are vague or not well defined for the project

#11 Have security evaluations / assessments been included in the project plan to be conducted at all major milestones and at the end of each System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) phase?

This question explores if security evaluations / assessments have been made part of the project plan.

- A. Security evaluations / assessments with corresponding time frame requirements have been clearly defined each phases and/or major milestone of the project
- B. Security evaluations / assessments have been clearly documented for each phase and/or major milestone of the project but do not include corresponding time frame requirements

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- C. Security evaluations / assessments are loosely defined for the project without time frame
- D. Security evaluations / assessments are vague or not well defined for the project without time frame

#12 Have security evaluations / assessments been conducted at all major milestones and at the end of each SDLC phase?

This question explores if security evaluations / assessments have been conducted.

- A. Security evaluations / assessments have been conducted for each phase and/or major milestone of the project
- B. Security evaluations / assessments have been scheduled for each phase and/or major milestone of the project and are on schedule to be done
- C.
- D. Security evaluations / assessment have not been conducted.

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Technology Risk

#1 Is there a plan for ensuring that deliverables meet the need of the users?

This question intends to evaluate whether or not users are sufficiently included in the most important phase, final delivery.

- A. There is a plan to ensure that the needs of the users are thoroughly met
- B. The plan for verification of user deliverables is nearly complete
- C. The plan for ensuring user deliverables is in the conceptual phase
- D. There is no plan for ensuring that deliverables meet users needs

#2 Is there a system load test or other measures to ensure good system performance(i.e. measures to test response time, system efficiency, etc.)

This question measures system performance and the risk associated with failing to test for performance.

- A. There is a load test for system performance in accordance with accepted industry standards
- B. There is a methodology for load testing but some phases are not complete
- C. The load testing plans have been discussed, but are not in place at this time
- D. There are no plans for load testing the system

#3 How thoroughly have the technology options been evaluated?

This question explores how the options for all aspects of the hardware and software environment have been selected.

- A. Experienced technical specialists performed a comprehensive evaluation of options using a proven methodology
- B. Experienced technical specialists made recommendations based on prior experiences
- C. Recommendations for the options were made by key functional personnel
- D. A detailed evaluation has not yet been performed

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#4 What is the knowledge of the proposed technology environment?

This question is concerned with the degree of knowledge available to the project team of the chosen hardware and operating system.

- A. The proposed platform is well understood by the project team and any technical difficulties that emerge are likely to be handled in house
- B. There are parts of the platform that are very clearly understood, however, aspects of the new platform will be seen for the first time.
- C. The platform is not well known to the project team but specialized expertise is readily available from vendors or constituents
- D. The platform is not well know to the project team and specialized expertise is not easily available

#5 Do the key technologies appear to be the appropriate foundation given the system design?

This question assesses the degree to which the chosen technologies will be maintainable and upgradeable.

- A. There is every reason to believe that the proposed technology represents a solid foundation for the foreseeable future
- B. Certain components may reach the end of their lifecycle before the system does, but there is a high probability that there will be an upgrade path for replacement
- C. Certain components may reach the end of their lifecycle before the system does and there does not appear to be a logical upgrade path
- D. Various components appear to have reached the end of their lifecycle and more advanced technology exists in the market or technology foundation has yet to be determined

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#6 Is the system design adequate to address the future capacity needs of the system?

This question assesses whether or not future growth of the system has been planned and if so, will it be adequate.

- A. The design will accommodate projected growth for the next 24 months or more
- B. The design will accommodate projected growth for the next 12 – 24 months
- C. The design will accommodate projected growth for the next 6 – 12 months
- D. Future capacity needs of the system were not projected

#7 How many existing computer systems must the project system interact with?

This question addresses the number of different computer interfaces that must be managed in order to complete the project.

- A. None, or a limited number of interfaces
- B. A moderate number of interfaces
- C. A large number of interfaces
- D. The number of interfaces is not known

#8 If the answer to Question #7 is one or more interfaces, what is the impact to the existing systems that will be interfaced with?

This question will gauge the impact on those existing systems the new system will interface with.

- A. Minimal, for example read only
- B. Moderate, slight modifications required to the existing systems
- C. Extensive modifications required to the existing systems. For example, updating the databases of the existing systems or an increase in the existing system loads
- D. The impact to existing systems is not known

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#9 To what extent will the new system enable de-installation of the existing system?

This question will assess the degree to which the proposed system replaces an existing system process.

- A. The new system will completely replace an existing system or an existing system does not exist
- B. The new system will be a new layer that will lead to the eventual replacement of an existing system
- C. The new system will be a new layer and there is not a business case for the elimination of any existing systems
- D. The new system will be run in parallel to an existing system

#10 What is the vendor's ability and/or in-house development staff's ability to implement the technology?

This question measures the risk associated with vendor and/or in-house staff experience or lack of it.

- A. The vendor and/or in-house staff has successfully completed a number of previous implementations
- B. The vendor and/or in-house staff has successfully completed some previous implementations (1-3)
- C. The vendor and/or in-house staff has limited experience with this technology
- D. The vendor and/or in-house staff has not previously implemented this technology

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Change Management / Operational Risk

#1 How is the acceptance testing plan being developed?

This question explores the assumptions about the way in which testing has been planned and conducted.

- A. Acceptance planning is being developed using an industry-accepted methodology with comprehensive input from user experts
- B. Acceptance planning is being developed by using an industry-accepted methodology with limited input from user experts
- C. Acceptance planning is being developed by using an approach based upon prior experiences but no formal methodology
- D. Acceptance planning has not yet been completed

#2 Is the current operations organization prepared to support the new system?

This question assesses the degree to which the current operations unit can support the new system.

- A. Operations have significant experience in managing similar environments and will require little or no training
- B. Operations have experience with similar environments, but will probably require some degree of training
- C. Operations has limited or no experience with the environment and will require extensive training to be effective
- D. Operations do not have the expertise required to manage the operations and new resources will have to be hired or contracted

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#3 Is the proposed hardware/software environment in production already within the organization?(i.e. mainframe, client server, middleware, etc.)

This question addresses the additional problems that might be posed by introducing new and possible unfamiliar facilities as well as a new system

- A. The environment is in production and well established
- B. The environment is currently in use in production but not well established and subject to changes
- C. The environment is currently in use for development efforts but has not yet been established in production
- D. Hardware/software environment is not currently in use

#4 How clearly defined are the system operating procedures (backups, restart/recovery, etc.)?

This question evaluates the thoroughness of system documentation for maintenance purposes.

- A. Well defined with easy, well documented, legible procedures
- B. Maintenance procedures exist and some documentation exists
- C. Maintenance procedures exist but documentation is limited
- D. System maintenance procedures are not clearly defined or documented

#5 How severely would business be impacted by a system failure?

This question probes the reliance that the business will place upon the system when it is operational.

- A. Minimal impact- system is not critical to daily business functions
- B. Moderate impact - system is critical to business, but a well documented, automated contingency approach exists
- C. Significant impact - system is critical to the business and contingency plan relies on work-around
- D. Severe impact - system is critical to the business and there is no well documented contingency plan

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#6 What is the required availability of the new system?

This question will determine the criticality of the system and the availability of maintenance windows.

- A. Minimal - system could experience an outage of 7 days or more
- B. Moderate - system could experience an outage of 48 hours
- C. Significant - system needs to be available during the normal workday: 8 hours a day, 5 days a week
- D. Severe - system needs to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

#7 What will be the magnitude of change that the new system will impose upon the users?

This question will determine how much change the system will inflict upon the organization. The more change a project brings to the organization the less likely people are willing to accept it.

- A. The new system will impose very little change, if any, upon the users
- B. The new system will change slightly the current daily operations of the users
- C. The new system will require significant changes by the users and will require training
- D. The new system will present an entirely new way for the users to complete daily operations

#8 Are department staff willing to accept this change?

This question determines if the staff are positive and committed to accepting the new system.

- A. Staff is well informed about the change and show strong enthusiasm
- B. Probably, staff seems enthusiastic but there has been no formal evaluation of their enthusiasm or detailed knowledge of the change
- C. Unclear, only limited or informal feedback from staff has been received
- D. No, firsthand feedback clearly indicates reluctance to the change

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#9 Will staff numbers be reduced as a result of implementing the system?

This question determines if employees will be threatened by the new system. If so, risk of users not accepting the system increases.

- A. There will not be a reduction in staff as a result of the new system
- B. A small number of reductions are expected to isolated areas of the organization
- C. Numerous reductions are expected to several levels of the organization
- D. Staffing projections have not been completed

#10 Will multiple business organization units be affected by the new system?

This question will determine the number of business units that will be affected by the new system. The more business units involved, the increased risk of the project.

- A. There will only be one business organization affected
- B. Multiple business units within the same agency will be affected
- C. Multiple business units in several agencies will be affected
- D. Multiple business units across several levels of state government (e.g. state, county, local) will be affected

#11 To what degree are changes to the current business processes being managed?

This question assesses how well changes to current process have been planned.

- A. There is a well documented plan in place for the redesign of the changed processes with a detailed rollout schedule
- B. There is a well documented plan in place for the redesign of the changed processes but a detailed rollout schedule has not yet been developed
- C. New process changes have been considered but are not clearly defined and documented
- D. Process changes have not yet been considered

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#12 What is the level of user involvement in the project?

This question measures the level of user involvement with the notion that less user involvement increases risk of success.

- A. The users are involved and have a permanent presence on the project team
- B. The users are available for consultation and to provide functional advice
- C. The users are minimally engaged on the project and clarification of requirements is difficult
- D. The users are not involved in the project

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Quality Assurance

#1 To what degree is a formal Change Management process in place and followed?

- A. There is a proven change control process in place, followed and effective
- B. There is a change control method in place and is generally used and followed
- C. Change control issues are dealt with on an item-by-item basis and are not tracked using a standard method
- D. There is no formal change control process in use on this project

#2 Is a formal Project Methodology used and followed?

- A. There is a proven project methodology is used, followed and effective
- B. There is a project methodology in place and is generally used and followed
- C. There is a project methodology established, but not followed or is ineffective
- D. There is no formal project methodology being used for this project, either commercial or in-house

#3 Are effective policies, standards, and procedures established and followed?

- A. There are established policies, standards, and procedures in place and are completely followed
- B. There are established policies, standards, and procedures in place and are generally followed
- C. There are established policies, standards, and procedures in place, but are not generally followed
- D. There are no policies, standards, or procedures established or ill defined and ineffective

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#4 Has all of the project documentation been reviewed for quality and completeness?

- A. All project documentation is complete and maintained
- B. All project documentation is generally complete and maintained
- C. Project documentation is available, but is not maintained
- D. There is not project documentation or ill defined and ineffective

#5 Are all general controls (i.e. Communications, Environmental, Physical, Management) established and adhered to?

- A. All general control have been established, are complete and maintained
- B. All general control have been established, are generally complete and maintained
- C. General controls exist, but are not maintained
- D. There are no general controls or are ill defined and ineffective

#6 To what degree has formal Quality Assurance oversight been established for this project?

- A. Fulltime Quality Assurance has been established for the life of the project
- B. Quality Assurance oversight has been established, at an acceptable level for this project
- C. Minimal Quality Assurance oversight has been established for this project
- D. There is no formal Quality Assurance oversight established for this project